



BARK OF THE BOXER

AMERICA'S GOLDEN GATOR



VOLUME: XV ISSUE: 2

MARCH 2010

USS Boxer on home stretch of drydock period

By MC2 John Siller

USS Boxer is in the final days of its Drydock Planned Maintenance Availability (DPMA), passing the half-way point of the project mid-February.

Once DPMA is complete, Boxer will get underway and begin sea trials and certifications in preparation for an upcoming deployment, said CTTC(SW) Amber Easter, DPMA Leading Chief Petty Officer.

The mission of a DPMA, which officially began Oct. 14, 2009, is to complete essential repairs and install upgrades to equipment throughout the ship.

"There is a lot of great work going on on the ship," said Easter. "The contractors and yard work-



ABH3(AW) Channelle Gardner cuts patches for lagging as part of Boxer's lagging team, just one of the many tiger teams working to refurbish the ship. Official U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Christopher Menzie.

ers are doing a great job and it is amazing to see what they are capable of."

"Everything has gone well so far," she added. "It is up to everyone from the contractors and shipyard workers to the ship's force to ensure we stay on schedule. Our hard work now will pay off in the future."

In addition to the contractors and yard workers, 112 Boxer Sailors are involved in the maintenance process. Seventeen Sailors are assigned to Quality Assurance and others are spread among various work teams such as lagging, habitability and ventilation.

The Quality Assurance teams work shifts covering 24 hours a day, every day. The other teams work hours similar to the rest of the crew with scheduling adjust-

See 'DPMA' pg 4

Regional Maintenance Commander Surveys Boxer Upgrades

By MC2 Christopher Menzie

The amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) hosted a visit by the commander of Navy Southwest Regional Maintenance Center (SWRMC) during its maintenance period at North American Steel and Shipbuilding Company's (NASSCO) shipyards in San Diego, Feb. 19.

Capt. Jerry Reina, whose command provides ship repair, support services, contract procurement and Sailor training in maintenance and repair of ships,

See 'SWRMC' pg 5



Capt. Jerry Reina (right), commander of Navy Region Southwest Maintenance Center, surveys some of the tagged out ship's systems with chief engineer, Cdr. Mark Hochstetler. Official U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Christopher Menzie.



A Message from the CMC

Greetings Shipmates -

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself: I'm CMDCM(SW) David Flannery, Boxer's new Command Master Chief. I come to you from an assignment as the Command Master Chief of Naval Base San Diego (32nd St.) and as such I am very familiar with the waterfront, tenant commands and operations of the base. I am, however, new to this particular command/platform, and I'm looking forward to getting back on the deck plates. The yard period is a time of hard work, early hours, and some inconveniences, but its purpose is of the utmost importance: making our warship mission-capable.



CMDCM David Flannery

Each one of us, regardless of rank or rate, plays a vital role in this process, and I thank you for the hard work you have put in thus far. Boxer has already passed the halfway point and in a short while will be leaving NASSCO to return to our home pier. There is still a lot of hard work in the days and months ahead, so I ask that you stay engaged, stay safe, and communicate with your chain of command.

With that in mind, I ask you all to keep an alert head on your shoulders and keep safety in mind for yourself, your shipmates and your families. We have come too far to lose someone in an unfortunate accident that could have been prevented with simple safety precautions and proper ORM.

In the coming weeks I'll be holding a number of CMC's calls to meet the crew. I look forward to meeting you and hearing what's on the deck plates.

Master Chief sends

I'm Just Sayin'....

By MCC(SW/AW) Elizabeth Lloyd

Be brilliant at the basics. Boxer Sailors are some of the finest in the Fleet, but I am here to tell you we need to get back to the basics and do the right thing no matter what. It's the little things that mess us up.

Shocking news...electricity kills! Before you stop reading what you think is another boring article about electricity and safety, give me a chance to save your life or someone else's. If we each follow the rules and ensure each other does, we can eliminate a lot of problems. That sounds pretty easy but how many of us take the time to do the right thing? I've heard the excuses: it takes too long to get proper safety gloves or the chair was here and I couldn't find a ladder or this is how we always do it. Those excuses are just that: lame and ineffective.

It shouldn't be news to anyone that we work in an extremely dangerous environment. Just recently, a chief petty officer from another ship died from being electrocuted. Okay, let's think about this: when we talk about safety violations and people getting hurt, I often chalk it up to inexperience, youth or stupidity. He had proven himself to be none of those things, so what category could he fall into? Carelessness, perhaps, maybe complacency. We don't know and he can't tell us.

I know some very squared away sailors who do everything by the book at work and then go home and mow the lawn in their flip-flops or drill a hole without using eye protection. Gloves, goggles and ear protection are not for the ship only. Safety isn't an option, safety is a choice.

I'm just sayin'...



Bark of the Boxer Editorial Staff

Boxer Public Affairs Officer
MCC (SW/AW) Beth Lloyd

Editor
MC2 Jeff Hopkins

Media Staff

MC1(SW) Fletcher Gibson
MC2(SW/AW) Jon Rasmussen
MC2 Christopher Menzie
MC2 John Siller
MC3 Anna Kiner

This newspaper is an authorized publication for military members onboard USS Boxer (LHD 4). Contents of Bark of the Boxer are not the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Navy.



Golden Gator Gets More Teeth



AOAN Jerald Barber demonstrates his knowledge of non-lethal combat under the influence of Oleoresin Capsicum spray to pass the Security Reaction Force Basic (SRFB) course as SRFB instructor MA2 (SW) Derek Vasko shouts instructions. Official U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Anna Kiner.

Ship's security force enhanced with crew training

By MC3 Anna Kiner

What could playing crisscross and leap frog have to do with naval combat readiness? When it comes to training U.S. Navy Sailors for the Ship's Security

Defense Force (SSDF), what may seem like children's games are anything but.

Instead, they are examples of tactical movement techniques used on board Navy vessels to help security forces reach a threat as quickly and safely as possible, said CTT2 Eric Cuevas, a Master-At-Arms onboard USS Boxer.

Tactical movement is just one part of shipboard security Boxer Sailors learn in order to become SSDF qualified. Ship's Reaction Force Basic (SRFB) is a two week course that teaches the various aspects of ship security, such as lethal and non-lethal weapon familiarization, rules of engagement and self defense. At the end of the two weeks the Sailors are asked to demonstrate their knowledge by performing non-lethal combat moves after having Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) sprayed on their faces to simulate a potential real life situation.

"They need to know themselves what it feels like, in case they are in a situation where it's in the air and they get hit," said Cuevas. "Not knowing could cause a safety issue for you and others too."

See 'SECURITY' pg 4

Meet the crew: Deck Department

By BMC(M/SW/AW) Pedro Santos

Boatswain's mates train, direct and supervise personnel in ship's maintenance duties and in all activities relating to marlinspike, deck, boat seamanship, painting, upkeep of ship's external structure, rigging, deck equipment and boats.

Boatswain's mates take charge of working parties, perform seamanship tasks, act as petty officer-in-charge of picketboats, self-propelled barges, tugs and other yard and district craft. They serve in, or take charge of, damage control parties.

BM's also operate and maintain equipment used in loading and unloading cargo, ammunition, fuel and general stores. BM's take

charge of and supervise UNREP (underway replenishment) procedures and equipment. They are integral to ship's navigation and serve as ship's helmsmen.

Boatswain's mates also summon the crew to work by a whistle known as a boatswain's call or a boatswain's pipe. On the ancient row-galleys, the boatswain used his pipe to "call the stroke." Later, because its shrill tune could be heard above most of the activity on board, it was used to signal various happenings such as knock-off and boarding of officials.

So essential was this signaling device to the well-being of the ship that it became a badge of office and honor in the American Navy.



BMSN Chang Carry (left) and BM1(SW) Christopher Clenney lug an 155-lb. detachable link to the anchor chain in the ship's foc'sle. Official U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Christopher Menzie.

‘DPMA’ continued from pg. 1

ments as needed. The DPMA leadership takes part in daily and weekly production meetings and briefings with the rest of the crew.

During these meetings, the leadership discusses scheduled work and addresses any issues which arise, keeping everyone on track and making sure the crew and contractors continue to work

together successfully and safely, said Easter.

Safety has been a paramount issue for not only those assigned to DPMA, but for the entire crew.

“I think everyone is doing their part to ensure proper safety procedures are followed,” said Easter. “Personal protective equipment is very important and looking out for

each other has been an enormous success.”

“The second half of DPMA is the most important,” said Easter. “It is up to each and every Boxer Sailor to remember that this is our ship and our home. Boxer Sailors need to take ownership of spaces and equipment. Be proud to bring the ship back to life.”

‘SECURITY’ continued from pg. 3

During the first week of the course Sailors receive familiarization with the 9mm pistol, M-16 rifle, 12-gauge shotgun, the six levels of force and safety. The second week covers practical knowledge of weapons handling, mechanical advantage control holds, tactical techniques, the apprehension and escorting of threats in a given situation, and finishing with the infamous pepper spray obstacle course.

SRFB courses are given every other month - mostly for Aviation Ordnancemen and Gunners Mates, those specifically involved with weapons - but the

class is open to other rates as well, said MA2 (SW) Derek Vasko, lead instructor of the SRFB course.

The course gives the ship’s security team training to respond at any time and target the threat as soon as possible, said Vasko.

After the SRFB course there is an advanced class that is even more intense and culminates with a training exercise where those involved are pepper-sprayed and shot at with paintballs, to reenact possible real life emergency scenarios. Graduate of the SRFA course will be the first responders during security alerts.

Sailors Set Sights on Qualifying



OS3 Victoria Alvanos fires an M16 rifle during a weapons qualification session at the Escondido Police Range. Boxer Sailors were given the opportunity to qualify on the M16 rifle and 9mm pistol in order to increase the number of Sailors able to stand ship Security watches.

Over the course of two days, more than 100 Boxer Sailors performed the standard courses of fire, and had the opportunity to earn the Navy’s marksman, sharpshooter and expert weapons qualifications ribbons. Official U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 John Siller.

Boxer SWOs share experiences with mids

By Lt. Gwen Mitchell

BERKELEY, Calif. - Surface warfare officers from USS Boxer (LHD 4) met with Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) midshipmen at Univ. of Calif., Berkeley during a visit here Feb. 19.

Lt. Gwen Mitchell, Lt. j.g. Tim Beach and Lt. j.g. Christine Bassitt spoke with the members about the rewards of becoming a surface warfare officer. The three visited the NROTC unit through a partnership which pairs surface warfare flag officers and ships with NROTC units.

Vice Adm. D. C. Curtis, commander, Naval Surface Forces and commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, expressed how important it was to remain focused on attracting the best leaders and most qualified individuals to join the surface warfare community in a naval message earlier this year.

"The surface warfare community has been very successful in promoting the rewards of being a surface warfare officer over the past several years," said Curtis in the message. "A great part of that success has been our ability to communicate who we are, what we do, and why Surface Warfare is the heart of the Navy and vital to National Security."

The Boxer team came with a unique message for their NROTC unit compared to what might come from other ships. While all can speak about surface warfare, the Boxer's role as a Marine transport allowed them to speak about our interoperability with all Navy designators and Marine Corps Military Occupational Specialties.

The division officers discussed their experiences and reasons why they chose surface warfare. They provided insights on the challenges of their leadership positions while pursuing their qualifications. Mitchell and Bassitt were even able to discuss issues faced by



Lt. Gwen Mitchell (front-3rd from left), Lt. j.g. Tim Beach (front-5th from left) and Lt. j.g. Christine Bassitt (front-4th from left) pose for a photo with the midshipmen of University of California, Berkeley's NROTC program. Courtesy photo.

women at sea with the attending female midshipmen.

"I appreciated the opportunity to speak with the midshipmen about being a SWO," said Bassitt. "It helped me to reflect on my own tour and realize that it had been the right choice for me."

They told the midshipmen that the leadership lessons they learn at NROTC will be applied not only in surface warfare, but across all communities of the Navy and Marine Corps. Excellence in academics, physical fitness and military aptitude will assist them in their communities, but will also prepare them for their futures in and out of the military.

After the briefing, the officers were available at a social for personal questioning. Each division officer had a queue of midshipmen and were engaged in discourse for most of the night.

NROTC Berkeley is one of the original six ROTC units created and was originally headed by the famous World War II fleet admiral, Chester W. Nimitz. Over the years, the addition of cross-town affiliates, California Maritime Academy, University of California Davis, and Stanford has increased the number of officers the unit has commissioned into the Navy and Marine Corps.

'SWRMC' continued from pg. 1

met with Boxer representatives to tour their departments and get an assessment of the upgrades taking place on board the ship.

Reina's stops included the new M-22 Osprey shop being installed in the aft hangar bay as part of an upgrade to adopt marine variants of the V-22 Osprey. The M-22 has medium lift transport capability

and is meant as a replacement of the CH-46E Sea Knight and the CH-53D Sea Stallion, which Boxer embarks for deployments.

Other work includes high-tech servers in the Joint Information Center, cylinder heads in the forward emergency diesel room, replacement and preservation of the batterboard wood detailing in

the well deck, engine turbines work and work on the dock floor.

Reina's assessment was positive. "I was impressed with the ship and commanding officer's active engagement of all the work in progress," he said. "It was all positive, even with a few areas requiring additional attention and contractor support."

